

Rhode Island DEM/Division of Agriculture

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill

Agreement Number: 12-25-B-0838

Final Report

Submitted: May 2010

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Final Performance Report

Grant 12-25-B-0838

Project Title: Video About All the Agriculture in Rhode Island

Project Summary

Many students in RI do not know where their food comes from. Ideally we would like to take all the students in RI to visit a farm. But that would be impractical and expensive. So we brought the farm to the schools via a video that showcases all the agriculture in RI. The video was distributed to every school in RI that has a sixth grade. The package included a pre and posttest.

Originally we were going to hire a videographer to videotape the farms. However, the executive director of RI Farm Bureau has extensive experience in video taping farms and it was decided to save some money by videotaping the farms ourselves and purchasing edit equipment to edit the show. By doing this, the Farm Bureau will be able to produce more than one show for schools.

Project Approach

The RI Farm Bureau produces a TV show called "RI Farm Watch". The video for the schools was produced by making a series of TV shows (30 minutes long) and editing them for the school video which is 30 minutes long. Thus, 300 minutes of video were reduced to 30 minutes. Over 20 farms were video taped. Each commodity grown in RI was featured in the video. The video also covered farmers markets. Another segment featured how soil is prepared for plants and the care of plants. The executive director of RI Farm Bureau spent over 100 hours editing the video and over 200 hours traveling to farms and video taping them. The Farm Bureau staff spent over 60 hours copying the tests, stuffing the envelopes and mailing them to over 200 schools in the state. The final video was broadcast as a RI Farm Watch TV show on the statewide interconnect.

All the crops grown in RI were featured in the video (sweet corn, tomatoes, other vegetables, apples, apple cider, peaches, cranberries, blueberries and other fruit. Nursery crops were covered, Christmas trees, hay, forestry and any other crop you can think of that is grown in RI.

The tape was broadcast on public TV (statewide interconnect) and it has been several times now. Segments are also posted on the internet. Go to our web page rifb.org and click on Videos

button. The first two videos listed are segments of the school video. (A Short Video About Agriculture in RI and Agriculture in RI Part One) The links will bring you to YouTube where the videos are posted.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The goal of the project was to produce a video about all the agriculture in RI and distribute it to every school in RI that had a sixth grade. The goal was achieved. Since we now own video equipment, it will be easier for us to produce more shows for schools.

I estimate about 1,500 students have seen the video. One teacher requested a copy of the video for each teacher in her school (24 videos).

No estimates are available as to how many people watch our TV Show, RI Farm Watch. However, Cox Cable has over 150,000 subscribers who have access to the Statewide Interconnect. Verizon has 30,000 subscribers who can watch something similar to the interconnect. Our show is broadcast 4 times a month (once a week) on Cox. It is broadcast 12 times per month on Verizon. My guestimate is that 5,000 to 10,000 people watch the show.

There was no survey. We had a pre-test and post-test for the students. We did not see the results of any of those tests.

The video has also been shown to a Cub Scout troop, the RI Ag Council, RI Farm Bureau Board of Directors, DEM Ag Advisory Committee and has been available at various fairs and other public meetings.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the project are the sixth grade students in RI who will hopefully learn more about agriculture in RI. Also the farmers of RI benefit because there is a more informed public.

Lessoned Learned

As stated above, our goals were achieved. There were no problems.

Contact Person

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To: Ken Ayars, Pete Susi, RIDEM Division of Agriculture

From: Stu Nunnery, Director, RICAPE

Re: Final Report 12-25-B-0838

1. Project Title Expanding Farm Business Development Services
Through a Unique Public-Private Partnership

The Rhode Island Center for Agriculture Promotion & Education (RICAPE)

2. Project Summary

The project was designed to augment RICAPE's training, technical assistance and marketing support services to RI and southern New England specialty crop farmers who conduct visitor services (agritourism) on site.

- The Rhode Island Center for Agricultural Promotion and Education (RICAPE), in support of its New England FarmWays (NEFW) agritourism initiative, employed 2008-2009 Farm Viability grant assistance in the amount of \$8000 to deliver to Rhode Island's specialty crop and visitor-destination farmers, a variety of technical, marketing and promotional support services. training program in collaboration with a seven state SARE consortium of state partners

This project was not previously funded by the SCBGP

Project Approach

The grant supported the following:

- A part time staff position to assist the Director in the coordination and execution of the project.

Duties Included

- The presentation (web formatting and linking, creation of on line forms and documents) and the marketing of no-cost consulting services provided by special arrangement with the RI Small Business Development Center at Johnson and Wales University.
- An agritourism training needs survey of southern new England farmers that elicited 230 responses
A first time showing of Food Inc. as a public education event (200 attendees)
- Expansion into regional agritourism marketing through an advertising collaboration with VisitNew England.com, Google's #1 website for NE attractions (Placement of NEFW logo and links on the RI, CT and MA pages under its own heading)
- Research into the funding and development of agritourism training videos, television advertising and other broadcast programming with First Priority Media of Cranston, RI

- Identification and meetings with potential corporate sponsors (e.g. Nationwide and Farm Family Insurance, Amica, Triple A, et al) for funding support of these efforts
- Participation in the Greenvale Vineyards winery/weddings strategy with the town of Portsmouth
Participation in Harvest New England's Ag Marketing Conference including the marketing and conducting of a special one day pre-conference agritourism
- Our approach to these activities has pursued a similar track to our previous efforts along these lines – research, surveys, site assessments, farm visits and meetings, proposals, staffing and partnership development and the undertaking of the myriad tasks necessary to complete the activity. With RICAPE's increased visibility and social capital we have been able to attract new funders, partners and collaborators in our work on behalf of RI's farmers. We are currently working as well with marketing strategists and fund development specialists to further secure our organization and expand these and other activities.

Services were promoted jointly on the nefarmways.org website and through two newsletters – “The Fence Post” a general readership e-newsletter produced weekly from May 1-Dec. 31, and “The Charter” a special edition e-newsletter sent to 40+ NEFarmWays member farms. Though collaborations with other agencies, organizations and media services, the consulting services were also broadcast on the URI Sustainable Ag Newsletter, Farm Fresh RI, the Providential Gardener, commodity group and other ag/hort-focused websites as well via e-blasts sent out periodically by still others engaged in the promotion of agricultural services, activities and events. It was common for our announcements to be forwarded via multiple list-serves.

Surveys were sent out originally by RICAPE via Survey Monkey to RI specialty crop farmers but eventually also by the CT Department of Ag's farmer list-serve and to some degree via the farmer list-serve from the MA Dept of Ag Resources. We included MA and CT to allow us to get a larger regional sampling.

We estimate that some 1500-2500 specialty crop farm operators in southern New England received either the survey directly or information about and/or a link to the survey through all sources. We consider 230 responses and a rate of 11-15% a very high response from farm operators in general and a very telling marker that agritourism and interest in both traditional and non-traditional agricultural enterprises and activities is an increasingly high priority among the region's specialty crop farmers.

(A copy of the survey's results are available for review as requested.)

The survey probed for agritourism training needs as perceived by specialty crop farm operators. The results confirmed the high interest in agritourism with a special attention to issues not normally associated with production or traditional agricultural practices alone including:

- Start ups for non-traditional agricultural activities (i.e. agritourism and visitor services)

- Right to farm and local ordinances as they pertain to conducting agritourism on-site
- Retail merchandising, pricing
- Developing value-added products from commodities
- Marketing and Visitor Outreach
- Websites and the internet – especially social marketing – Facebook, Twitter etc.

To develop marketing material we explored the notion of “branding” the NEFarmWays agritourism program and individual farms via promotional items that could be purchased and sold at specialty crop farms hosting visitors as a way of furthering the marketing of those farms and agritourism in general. We spoke with marketing and public relations professionals as well as “premium” companies that produce promotional items for every purpose and client.

We were advised: given the uncertain status of many farms engaged in or interested in agritourism, and lacking a uniform “positioning” needed to effect a successful promotional campaign, it was premature to develop such products and further, that there were more primary tasks that needed to be undertaken by RICAPE and our farmers to further develop more farm destinations including site and enterprise assessments and more trainings. We felt the training needs survey would indicate a very wide range of needs and were proven correct.

This summer we are exploring more specifically-targeted promotional items and activities that better reflect current realities and will still provide a successful marketing kick to farmers and agritourism alike.

The growth of Agritourism in RI and Southern New England is handicapped in part by the shrinking budgets of state agricultural agencies and the limited funding from foundations, specifically for agricultural initiatives not directly focused on farmland preservation.

As the 2007 NASS Census on Agriculture has shown, agritourism is growing exponentially in RI and NE and needs the funding to provide a broader range of services to farmers to develop non traditional enterprises that generate revenues. We have long felt that corporate foundations and sponsorships might best underwrite our project-focused and longer- term (1-3+years) operational activities now including training programs, marketing and promotional activities, research, special events, personnel, and contractors, data management and fund development systems and expertise, the production of web and video programming, television advertising and more. In many ways our agenda more appropriately fits the corporate marketing model than the foundation model.

Our meetings also explore the potential marketing returns/gains for the corporate sponsors and the best positioning strategy for copy, logos, ad credits, etc for any of the proposed activities being funded. Finally, we seek multi-year commitments both for our purposes and to ensure that the sponsor gets maximum marketing reach over an extended period.

Our corporate targets to date have included Nationwide, Farm Family and Amica Insurance Companies, Triple A Southern New England, United Natural Foods, travel and tourism companies, banks, box Stores (Lhowes, Home Depot,) large nurseries and other agricultural concerns, and large food and food service concerns.

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Goals and Outcomes Achieved

- Identified southern new England's farmer agritourism training needs
- Increased the visibility of RI's farms and farmers to a greater portion of the traveling public both in RI and southern New England region
- Increased the number of farms now participating in training and technical assistance provided by NEFW
- Increased agriculture's positive profile and standing among the public, public officials, and the press and media
- Launched with the RISBDC a first of its kind business counseling service for farm operators
- Broadened the range of marketing and promotional activities on behalf of farms and farmers in RI and Southern New England
- Created new links with the CT and MA Departments of agriculture toward a tri-state agritourism training and marketing network
- Served as an advocate for farm and agricultural issues through the media and in town-farm relations

This section states that the number of farms now participating in the training and technical assistance has increased. By how much did it increase?

We have mentioned that some 230 Farms in southern New England participated in the agritourism training needs survey. Our partners at the RI, CT and MA Departments of Agriculture have extended our outreach to more than 1000 farmers. In 2009, more than 350 farmers attended four training workshops, and in 2010, some 100 farmers and service providers attended a multi-state workshop. Our newsletters reach more than 1000 farmers. And this summer farm site assessments are being offered by RICAPE to specialty crop farm operators in CT, MA and RI. We anticipate 15-20 assessments will be conducted this summer and another 10-15 in the fall of 2010.

RICAPE is one of only two agritourism "hubs" in New England, the other being the VT Farms Association. State agencies provide some marketing activities including maps and websites but we remain the primary providers of marketing services, technical assistance and training for agritourism in the region (since 2005).

In 2009 we collaborated with VisitNewEngland.com, Googles #1 site for NE attractions to raise agriculture's profile in the region by posting the NEFarmWays site, member farms and an event schedule around the region on the VNE site. This summer, VNE is offering special advertising rates on its site to increase traffic to Southern New England farms. VNE has also connected NEFW with travel professionals looking to promote new product (destinations) to sell to vacationers and in state visitors during the summer and fall 2010 seasons.

RICAPE's activities have been part of a larger state (RI) effort to promote farm viability. RICAPE has taken the lead in articulating a larger vision for agritourism in the state and region and the need for philanthropic and corporate support for it. RICAPE provides testimony and material support to farmers addressing local zoning and permitting issues. RICAPE is a member of the Steering Committee of the RI Ag Partnership, a consortium of state agencies, non-profits and assorted associations to develop a five-year plan for agriculture in collaboration with the American Farmland Trust.

RICAPE places op-eds and articles in the news media as a frequent element of its agritourism PR and public relations/education strategy. Since 2008, RICAPE has been participating in a seven state SARE initiative (WV-Maine) to develop a region-wide agritourism marketing, training and technical assistance network.

In 2009, RICAPE hosted four multistate agritourism training workshops and in 2010, one multi-state workshop.

We also host public education events (See Food, Inc. on the final FV report) and our NEFarmWays program distributes weekly newsletters to the public and to specialty crop farmers about agricultural services, activities and events provided by RICAPE and others

Each year, RICAPE hosts "Feast in the Field" as a special fundraising and public education event in support of agritourism.

Finally, the 2007 NASS Census of Agriculture shows that revenues from agritourism on RI farms grew from \$23,000 in 2002 - \$698,000 in 2007.

This summer, as a companion piece to our fall of 2009 Agritourism Training needs survey, we will establish a baseline from the 230 respondents of what actions were taken on the farm to start or enhance agritourism activities.

With 5+ years of experience, and with farm destinations at various stages of development, we make the following prediction: That our marketing, training and technical assistance services to specialty crop farmers has helped them to develop new skills to do the following:

- Conduct start up and expansion of a variety of agritourism enterprises
- Develop more efficient infrastructure and systems (pricing, retail merchandising, staffing, display and sales, etc.)
- Enhance visitor services and amenities, (restrooms, parking, food service, signage, etc.)
- Address more proactively fire, health, safety and building codes
- Secure appropriate insurance to cover multi-risk agritourism activities
- Conduct more successful marketing and public relations
- Enhance farm aesthetics,
- Conduct new and/o more on the farm events
- Engage in more comprehensive business planning
- Develop successful seasonal scheduling patterns
- Conduct site and enterprises assessments
- Review physical plant and facilities needs and potential
- Review the revenue generating potential of new products and product line extensions

The fall 2010 Survey will tell us what actions are being taken and by whom.

Beneficiaries

Specialty crop and visitor-destination farmers in RI and the SNE region

- The general public
Media and marketing professionals
- Public officials in RI, CT and MA
- Related philanthropic and corporate sponsors/partners
- Tourism agencies and professionals
- Specialty crop and visitor-destination farmers in RI and the SNE region – now receive annual multi-track training, technical assistance and marketing support to develop skills to promote their farm site destinations
- The general public – has become more aware of the farm destination as a place for a host of agricultural activities, product sales, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities
- Media and marketing professionals – are working more closely with farm operators to provide lower cost marketing and PR services and help position farms for the visitor markets
- Public officials in RI, CT and MA – are more aware of the importance of agritourism to farm viability in-state and region-wide and are working to improve relations with farmers and address those regulations that specifically support or hinder the growth of agritourism
- Related philanthropic and corporate sponsors/partners – better understand and are now supporting agricultural activities beyond farmland preservation alone
- Tourism agencies and professionals – have identified farms as significant visitor destinations and are working with RICAPE and others to promote farms, their products, services and amenities.

All of the above have participated in RICAPE's trainings and technical assistance outreach to specialty crop farmers.

Lessons Learned

- Destination farmers have a long list of agritourism training needs.
- RI visitor destination farms in RI (@100-125) are in several stages of readiness to host visitors:
 - Ready for visitors with appropriate amenities (parking lots, bathrooms, food service)
 - Ready for visitors with visitor activities and on the farm programming
 - Advertising for visitors but with few amenities or activities
 - In start-up mode
- Farm operators who expressed the need for business consultation services have nonetheless participated to date in small numbers.
- Farmers receiving counseling do not (are not able to) always follow through on the advice and next steps provided.
- Farmer's continue to have difficulty planning, executing and paying for good marketing services.

- Several farmers that received marketing services through NEFW failed to pay their annual memberships because of expressed financial difficulties.
- The marketing of farm destinations/agritourism is still an emerging art/science. NEFW has taken up a leadership position regionally.
- Not all marketing venues are up to speed on farm attractions nor on how to position farm destinations to a variety of public audiences.
- The language of agritourism is still being refined (via NEFW and others.)

Contact Person: Stu Nunnery

Additional Information

- During the term of this grant, there have been other gains:
 - Through a two year SARE grant (2008-2010) RICAPE began a partnership with seven states in the NE and MA regions to create an agritourism network of technology transfer, communications, training and technical assistance to the region's destination farmers.
 - A USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant is allowing RICAPE to expand and refine our collaboration with the RISBDC and JWU and to re-market the business counseling services to farmers.
 - A new NEFW membership strategy is being put into place to attract more farm destinations to the program at a reduced cost.
 - First Priority Media and RICAPE have scheduled sponsor meetings this month to identify funding for summer-long advertising and promotion of the region's farms on regional television, and video agritourism insurance training programs with the support of farm insurers.
 - NEFW is conducting more farm site assessments to assist more farms to get into business this year.
 - In March the first of a NEFW regional agritourism training programs was held in Wallingford, CT and presages a new partnership with both the CT and MA Departments of Agriculture for NEFW to conduct similar workshops in both states.
 - A readiness survey (for visitors) of RI's farms is being prepared for broadcast.
 - A current FV grant proposal seeks to create a mini-documentary on the zoning issues challenging RI's farms and farmers – with agritourism a leading issue in that challenge.

We thank you for your consideration and for the financial assistance that this grant provided in our important and mutual efforts.

Sincerely,



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Kids First Final Performance Report: ***Submitted by: Dorothy Brayley***

Project Title: The Rhode Island Farm to School Project
Submitted by: Kids First

Project Summary

The Rhode Island Farm to School Project was developed in order to bring fresh local fruits and vegetables to school lunch programs throughout the state. Our purpose was to improve children's nutrition, support local agriculture and farm viability and help preserve open space and the quality of Rhode Island's environment.

This program addresses two critical issues in our state— the economic viability of small farms and preservation of open spaces and the epidemic of childhood obesity.

While the USDA estimates that 94 percent of farms in the United States are small farms (those earning \$250,000 or less), the lion's share of food production has shifted to fewer, larger farms, and smaller farms must struggle to survive. The failure of small farms results in farmland lost to real estate development, thus impacting rural communities with economic hardship and environmental damage. Small farms in Rhode Island must find new ways to market their produce, and schools represent an important opportunity in this regard. Rhode Island served more than 14 million school lunches, more than four million school breakfasts, and more than 300 thousand after school snacks in the 2006-2007 school year. The program has created a new "school market" that is providing a stable and predictable demand for large volumes of produce, including some smaller (substandard sized) fruits and vegetables that previously did not have a sales outlet. This is helping to ensure sustained markets for local products throughout the state.

At the same time, childhood obesity has emerged as a leading national public health threat and Rhode Island is not exempt from this national "epidemic." In Rhode Island, the Department of Health reported that in the 2006-07 school year, nearly one in five (18.8%) Rhode Island kindergarteners were obese while 17 percent of seventh graders were obese. High school students fared a little better at 11 percent. The Rhode Island Farm to School Project provides an exceptional opportunity to improve the school nutritional environment by increasing the amount and quality of fruits and vegetables that are available to children in the school meal programs.

This is an excellent time for the growth of the Farm to School program. Rhode Island is a small and densely populated state. These two factors are ideal for Farm to School as it has enabled us to connect all 36 school systems to farmers within the state, making “Buy Local First” a highly achievable statewide goal. Currently in Rhode Island there is a great deal of activity around the concept of “local food”. Farm to School language has been instituted in school district wellness policies, in RI Nutrition Requirements for school meals (RINR, effective September 2009) and in district food service contracts. As well, our farmers have become enthusiastic participants in the program. In Rhode Island, we have a unique opportunity to positively impact national buying practices of the large food service management companies as the three largest (Sodexo, ARAMARK and Chartwells) operate school food service programs in our state. RI is well poised right now to become the first self-sustaining statewide Farm to School model for the nation.

With our first Specialty Crop grant, awarded in 2007, our goals were focused on five major initiatives that included building support in schools through the District Wellness Councils; providing training and technical assistance for schools to participate in Farm to School; facilitating a new market for schools with a bulk pricing structure; facilitating new distribution networks from farm to school; and finally, helping to expand the market so that other institutions can tap into this new system. Working towards these goals, we were able to successfully implement the program, involving all 36 RI school districts and significantly increasing the amount and variety of produce being used by the schools. Building on that success, the current grant is being used to institutionalize the Farm to School Project and make it self-sustaining by strengthening the connections between farmers and schools through relationship building, education and communication.

Project Approach

During the grant period, Farm to School Coordinator Kimberly Sporkmann worked closely with farmers, distributors, food service directors and administrators to facilitate program implementation, promote working relationships, and overcome obstacles. She worked to further shorten product distribution channels, and facilitate “growing relationships” by meeting with farmers and food service directors to promote long-term buying and selling arrangements. Kimberly met with farmers and food service vendors to develop planting and harvesting schedules that meet school needs and to identify new types of produce to be utilized in the school market. She also worked with school food service companies and employees to develop the skills needed to receive, store, prepare, cook and serve fresh foods in schools and she maintained statistical information through a database which documented school district purchases and Farm to School activities. Significant results and favorable developments of Kimberly’s work can be found in the next section (Goals and Outcomes Achieved) in this report.

To improve the sustainability of each district making local purchases for the long term, education is essential. This past year we provided chef demonstrations to showcase fresh produce being served in the schools which included taste testing, visits from local farmers, and cooking classes.

Students received classroom education programs that integrate farming, local agriculture, nutrition and local food sustainability into existing classroom curricula. We presented 95 programs in 25 school districts throughout the state and reached over 8,000 students, 300 teachers and over 600 parents. Kids First was able to sponsor 27 school to farm field trips for 830 children from seven school districts.

Communications Specialist Jennifer Quigley Harris has worked hard to build our communications network. The Farm to School web page on the Kids First web site

(www.kidsfirstri.org) has been expanded and revamped and is regularly updated. Additionally, she has produced a RI Farm to School informational and best practices brochure that was updated for Spring 2009. Jennifer, assisted by Kelly Swanson, made sure that Farm to School activities were kept in the public eye during 2009 with approximately 100 publicity releases and 20 articles appearing in local newspapers, magazines and e-newsletters where Farm to School is discussed.

Our educational activities have brought us into some exciting partnerships. A partnership has been formed with RICAPE to present gardening related nutrition education programs where we tie in Farm to School. This 2009-2010 school year, 95 programs will be conducted in schools across three districts. We also participate in the South Side Community Land Trust Urban Agricultural Calendar (called "Plant Providence 2010"). A workshop has been developed with them to be presented in October entitled "Gardening with Youth". It is a three tiered workshop with a nutrition education component that will include the importance of supporting local farms.

Our Farm to School Coordinator, did a presentation for attendees at the Slow Food RI "Make Time for Lunch Sit In" on Labor Day. Kimberly described what constitutes a school lunch, explained the RI Nutrition Requirements, and highlighted how local produce can fit in to the school lunch program.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

With the Farm to School Project fully implemented, our new two-year goal (January 2009-December 2010) was to institutionalize the program and create an environment where food service vendors, schools and farmers would seek every opportunity to provide fresh RI grown produce to the schools with support from a self-sustaining infrastructure. The Farm to School activities in 2009 relate to specific objectives formulated to achieve this goal.

Objective 1: Provide technical assistance to solidify lasting purchasing relationships between farmers and school systems; facilitate market expansion to include a wider variety of RI-grown produce; and develop a food supply grown for the school or institutional market.

In 2009 the Farm to School Project was quite successful in expanding the variety of produce being purchased by the schools with the addition of 12 new RI grown products. At the same time, it appears in the table on the following page that purchases of some items have declined in 2009 from 2008. Apples, potatoes, carrots and butternut squash from the 2009 harvest are currently in storage and will continue to be purchased over the winter months, thus improving those numbers. Other produce such as green beans, apple cider and fresh corn on the cob have been difficult to utilize in the schools, and have proven not to be the most successful products for the school lunch program at this time. Part of our challenge for 2010 is to determine which farm products are best suited to the school market and are most likely to be in demand and then encourage farmers to grow these specifically for the school market.

Comparison of 2008 and 2009 Farm to School Purchases
Locally Grown Fruits, Vegetables, Meat and Eggs
Rhode Island School Districts

Fruits-Vegetables	2008 Amounts	2009 Amounts*
Apples	2,511 cases	3,898 cases
Corn	157 bushels	135 bushels
Tomatoes	14 cases	124 cases
Potatoes	40,285 pounds	24,500 pounds
Butternut Squash	1,960 pounds	831pounds
Broccoli	420 pounds	574 pounds
Peaches	166 cases	401 cases
Strawberries	255 quarts	866 quarts
Carrots	2,000 pounds	600 pounds
Cider	506 gallons	0
Cucumbers	0	60.5 cases
Cabbage	120 pounds	0
Cherry tomatoes	44 flats	18 flats
Green beans	100 pounds	100 pounds
Lettuce	2 cases	22 cases
Zucchini	1,505 pounds	1,140 pounds
Summer squash	0	200 pounds
Blueberries	0	37 cases
Cantaloupe	0	2 bins
Pears	0	1 case
Peppers	0	223 cases
Plums	0	15 cases
Celery	0	1 case
Eggs	0	6 dozen
Ground beef	0	40 pounds
Spinach	0	4 cases
Eggplant	0	144 cases

We have made progress in moving the Farm to School program towards achieving the objective of developing a food supply grown for the school market. Currently two farmers are dedicating acreage specifically to growing crops for RI schools. Three Schartner Farm acres are dedicated to carrots with an expected yield of 60,000 pounds. One Steere Farm acre is dedicated to growing broccoli with an expected yield of 2,000 pounds. Both of these crops were identified by RI Food Service Directors during the springtime as desirable yet unavailable. Farmers planted them in direct response to conversations with Food Service Directors during Kids First-hosted farm tours this summer. The vegetables have been served in both the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the school lunch program.

This season, five apple growers have altered their orchard management techniques to yield a greater amount of small, school sized apples. Steere Farm, Barden Orchard, Harmony Farms, Hill Orchards and Knight Farm all thinned trees more conservatively this season in direct response to the fact that there was such a demand by the schools for these apples over the past two school years.

For the past few years, Allan Hill has not had an outlet for all the stone fruit that he grows and was planning to remove the trees. This year, he started selling this stone fruit to RI schools in Central Falls. The district bought all the farmer had grown and are anxiously awaiting next year's crop.

Providing technical assistance to solidify purchasing relationships between farmers, school systems and distributors is critical to the success of the Farm to School Project and is ever challenging. There are three management companies in the state, each with its own distributor and supply chain pattern of purchasing and thus each with unique challenges. Communication with all parties is ongoing with the goal being to shift distribution practices to a new supply chain pattern of local purchasing that dissipates challenges.

To problem solve and open up channels of communication a roundtable was held in March of 2009. Food Service Directors got to share stories of successes and difficulties and distributors were able to showcase their products and suggest possible solutions for ongoing problems.

Recently our Farm to School Coordinator, Kimberly Sporkmann held a meeting with AT Siravo, the produce distributor that handles the DOD Fresh program. They discussed the USDA Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food campaign and the distributor agreed to work on getting more RI grown into the DOD program. This has great potential to increase the amounts of RI grown produce that goes to the schools as AT Siravo handles the entire Northeast DOD Fresh program.

To build rapport between farmers and food service directors, two farm tours were held during the summer of 2009 involving 16 food service directors/managers from 13 school districts to 10 different farms throughout the state. Food service directors got to know the farmers, learned how farms are managed and became aware of the purchasing possibilities for them within their districts. Farmers, on the other hand, became more aware of the produce needs of the districts and began to see opportunities to plant for the school market.

Technical assistance also takes the form of in-service training for food service workers to introduce proper handling and preparation of fresh local produce. This past Fall, food service worker orientation programs were held in 22 districts and involved 830 workers. Kids First chefs provided the recipes and skills training for these innovative programs.

The Farm to School program has also begun to bring fresh local produce into the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) where we are connecting participating schools to distributors who can provide cut, tray ready local produce. Additionally, we began to bring fresh local produce into the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), where some children had the opportunity to visit local area farms.

Executive Director Dorothy Brayley and Kimberly Sporkmann are actively participating on the Northeast Farm to School Regional Steering Committee. And Kids First represented the Regional Farm to School network at the New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference in New Hampshire this past autumn.

We also attended the Regional Steering Committee's workshop on "Using Economic Analysis for Farm to School" this January 2010 to gain a better understanding of the potential impact our efforts could have on the agricultural economy of our regions.

Objective 2: Deliver a vigorous and innovative education program to create demand within schools and the community to "Buy Local First".

Farm to School education programs were strong in 2009, with 95 programs delivered and 27 School to Farm field trips. This year a new education program was developed by our Farm to School Coordinator to address economic issues around buying nutritious food. "Eating Healthy on a Budget" was designed specifically for parents. Audiences learn about their children's lunch program, and the importance of demanding RI Grown for their kids from their food service providers. Recipes demonstrated closely resemble the healthier options offered to kids for lunch as well as including food items grown and harvested in RI to emphasize the use of local produce. Rhode Island grown potatoes, apples, spinach, lettuce, asparagus, eggs and salsa have all appeared on the educational program menu. Parents receive packets including information on ways to get local produce with three types of food benefits (food stamps/EBT, WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program). They also receive information on where to find farmers markets and how to buy fresh produce for less.

Schools participating in School to Farm Tours were offered Farm to School education programs prior to the field trip to orient kids to the farm. Classroom programs designed to teach children why Rhode Island farms are so important to their environment, community and health are followed by a field trip to a local farm where children learn about how a farm operates and what the job of the farmer entails. The students participate in activities such as hayrides, picking fruit or feeding animals.

The School to Farm Tours varied in their offerings:

- Three groups of students from Newport got the chance to pick all the blueberries they could eat at Schartner Farm in Exeter. Kids then met the farmer and learned about all the different jobs involved in farming.
- Children from Woonsocket and Warwick visited Jaswells Farm in Smithfield to pick apples and learn about cider pressing.
- One hundred 7th and 8th grade students from Calcutt Middle School toured Dame Farm and experienced a corn maze.
- Warwick and West Warwick elementary school students visited Morris Farm in Warwick to tour the farm, play in the corn maze and feed the cows and chickens.
- 3rd graders from Wicks School in Warwick visited Salisbury Farm in Johnston to take a hayride and learn all about farming.

During the spring, eight middle schools competed in a poetry, art, or essay contest called "What's So Great About Rhode Island Grown". Winners were awarded a day of strawberry picking at a local farm and their work will be featured on this coming Spring's posters to

promote strawberry festivals throughout the state. The winning entries can be viewed on the Kids First website (www.kidsfirstri.org.newfarm.htm).

Whenever possible, we like to bring farmers into the classroom education programs. The children love the interaction and it gives them a sense of connection. We have even recruited one farmer to be a Kids First Professional. Hope Ryan presents Farm to School classroom programs and accompanies students on School to Farm field trips.

Objective 3: Develop a communications network that will build a sense of community and momentum among parents, teachers, students, administrators, farmers, and food service vendors.

RI Farmer Trading Cards became a popular item in 2009 and over 1400 cards have been produced and distributed in classrooms across the state or through cross promotions with Whole Foods Market. Each card displays a picture of a Rhode Island farmer or farm family on the front. On the back is information about the farmer and the farm, equipment “stats” and a list of produce items procured for the schools.

This past year has seen the creation of our new Farm to School logo, and also the arrival of two new RI Grown costume characters –Miss RI Apple and Mr. RI Potato, who have delighted children at Harvest Festivals, FFVP launches and in classrooms throughout the state.

We have most recently developed a “RI Grown” sticker, which will be placed on the lunch tray of each student in the state when they purchase a lunch that includes a RI grown product. These stickers will serve to take the knowledge that the school is supporting local agriculture beyond the cafeteria. We hope to generate interest and involvement from parents and other community members outside the school for the Farm to School program.

RI Harvest Festivals were held this fall in six school districts involving over 2000 students. Harvest Festivals are celebrations of the harvest of Rhode Island grown produce. School lunch includes whatever locally grown products are available at the time. RI Harvest Festivals began in early October, and will run through March or as long as the RI produce lasts. Offerings have included RI grown squash, zucchini, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, peaches, apples, potatoes, butternut squash and more. Chartwell's managed districts have even treated students to a lavish buffet complete with silver chafing dishes, a chef's carving station and decorated with hay bales, corn stalks and pumpkins.

Most festivals have included a visit by one of Kids First costumed characters, Mr. RI Potato or Miss RI Apple. Kids First representatives bring posters and coloring sheets to help kids learn about farms and farm fresh produce. Many festivals include a visit by a RI farmer who talks about their farm, the crops they grow and why it is important to support local farmers by eating locally grown. Students who participate in the festival by purchasing school lunch receive two RI Farmer trading cards.

Early in September, Jamestown schools served a meal made up entirely of food sourced from within 15 miles of the island. Parents were invited to join their children to enjoy RI grown Eggplant Parmesan, Oriental Stir Fry, Vegetable Pizza and Spinach Salad with Little Rhody hard boiled eggs. Rhody Fresh milk was served and fresh RI pears, peaches and apples were offered for dessert. This celebration included an

educational display from a beekeeper and his bees as well as a visit from an adorable Rhody Fresh calf. The event got great publicity, including newspaper articles and a spot on the evening news.

Objective 4: Continue to seek funding to fully support the successful delivery of these objectives.

We are pleased to report that we are fully funded for 2010 due to two-year funding awarded by the Carter Family Charitable Trust, the Sharpe Family Foundation, and the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Lead Trust. Additionally we have received a 2010 grant from the RI Department of Environmental Management: Division of Agriculture for \$14,000, a second year transitional grant from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI (\$35,000) and a grant from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation (\$25,000).

Beneficiaries

The RI Farm to School Project benefits all RI school children through the increased availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in their school meals programs and through educational programs that increase understanding of the healthy benefits of fresh local produce, and the importance of supporting local farms. Along with the children, however, teachers, administrators, food service staff, and parents also have the opportunity to directly participate in educational activities including chef demonstrations and School to Farm Tours. As stated previously, Farm to School education programs reached 8,000 students, 600 teachers and 300 parents during 2009.

Teachers, administrators, food service staff, and most importantly parents, have heard the “Buy Local” message through Farm to School publicity in their local papers and/or TV news, as well through observing the increased interest in and requests for fresh fruits and vegetables by their children.

RI farmers who are able to sell their farm goods to the school market are directly served with increased sales and hopefully improved farm financial viability. The Growth of the Farm to School program and the potential for the Rhode Island Farm to School Project to impact the competitiveness of specialty crops can be seen in the table found on page 4 which demonstrates the growth in the amount and variety of local farm products distributed to RI schools between 2008 and 2009.

More farmers will have the opportunity to participate in the program as more children and their families are exposed to locally grown foods through the school meals programs and interest in buying local RI grown farm products grows. In fact, all citizens in RI benefit from improved farm viability with the addition of this new school market for RI farm products as more farmland in RI stays in farming and open space/farmland is preserved for all Rhode Islanders to enjoy.

Lessons Learned

Sodexo School Services manages school food programs in 12 of the 36 school districts in RI, including five of the six RI *Core Cities* which are the most densely populated, ethnically diverse, low income population centers. The 12 Sodexo accounts, in total, represent greater than 50 percent of all RI students. Sodexo, however, has not committed to consistent purchases of RI products and its low participation in the RI Farm to School program was a disappointment in 2009. Chartwells and ARAMARK have made consistent purchases of RI products, but their quantities are not as significant as would be the quantities that could be purchased by Sodexo accounts for the school meals program. We will be working in 2010 to gain greater support and commitment from Sodexo School Services as it would significantly impact the RI Farm to School program.

One of the greatest challenges we have faced in developing lasting purchasing relationships is with the distribution model currently in place with two of the three food service corporations in the state. During our roundtable meeting it was identified that the local distributor servicing these schools was slow to pay the farmers and held the product so long in storage that what the schools finally received was not as fresh as it should have been. By bringing that information to light, it gave us the opportunity to help the distributor identify and fix its customer service issues. Unfortunately, they chose not to do this, and the customers elected to try out other local distributors. At this point, that is proving challenging, as they are establishing new business relationships and learning new processes with multiple distributors. The broadliner, Sysco, is also involved in the distribution of RI Grown by purchasing produce from a Providence distributor on behalf of the schools. This adds a second middle man and greater cost to the produce. The fact that the processes to source, publish, market, order and purchase RI Grown are so new and still continuing to evolve has been a barrier to streamlined RI Farm to School distribution.

A roundtable meeting is scheduled for February of this year to review these new processes and help all interested parties understand what is needed to simplify the process. This meeting will also provide the opportunity to remind the group of RI Food Service Directors as a whole that their buying power could impact the price of RI Grown in their favor, and encourage a commitment to purchase a certain amount of product from the next harvest so that it can be produced at the lowest cost.

To demonstrate the effect that the Farm to School program has on the school nutritional environment, we can look at the city of Central Falls. Central Falls made a tremendous Farm to School effort this year, purchasing apples, broccoli, carrots, lettuce, peaches, plums, potatoes and strawberries. They participated in the "What's so Great About RI Grown" contest last Spring and held an autumn harvest festival this past October. They also took advantage of our education programs and had the Farm to School coordinator teach a class to the 7th graders this fall. During that Farm to School classroom program, the contest winners enthusiastically shared the story of how they won the contest and picked enough strawberries (their prize) to put in the freezer and last into the autumn. The entire grade is now involved in a civics project where they are interacting with the food service director in their school to influence the improvement of the school lunch. More local fresh fruits and vegetables are sure to be on the improvement list!

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Farm Fresh

Grant # 12-25-B-0838

Project Title

Enhancing the Online RI Farm Database

Project Summary

Rhode Island is home to hundreds of farms that grow specialty crops but the local market for these foods, where direct sales maximize profitability, is not as established or accessible as that for non-local foods. Currently, you won't find RI foods at most supermarkets, major food distributors, restaurants or schools. Food purchasers at these institutions need information about who's growing what and where and how to get it. Given these access barriers, Farm Fresh created a website that is a comprehensive database of RI farms, indexed by foods grown, season and how to buy each farm's food.

This project aimed to ensure the accuracy and breadth of the information in the online RI farm database at www.farmfreshri.org by getting current farm data from more RI farms. It built upon the strength of the listings by increasing RI farms' prominence on Google Local and providing tools to support new farmers with training and land.

Project Approach

Over the past year, Farm Fresh RI updated and widely promoted the Local Food Guide of RI farms, foods and markets at www.farmfresh.org. October 2009 was the busiest month. There were 65,000 unique visitors to the website. Specific farm, food and market pages were viewed 250,000 times. But even during the slowest month of the year, January 2010, there were still 35,000 unique visitors looking for winter farmers markets, CSA sign ups and other RI farm information. During the past year, 72 farmers have updated their own farm information, 165 farms have had their information updated by Farm Fresh staff. Forty-two new Rhode Island farms, mostly specialty crop growers, have been added to database, and 10 inactive farms have been removed.

Code was added to the website to export the farm data to Google Local, which has increased the visibility of RI specialty food producers on the Internet. The Land Jobs Stuff bulletin board (previously described in the proposal as the *New Farmers Wanted* tool) was integrated into the Local Food Guide homepage and has become a widely used resource for classified listings. Many farmers use it to find land, labor and tools. In fact, over 200 classifieds have now been posted to Land Jobs Stuff.

The Local Food Guide does not focus on any one specialty crop but instead aims to promote consumption of the wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables produced by Rhode Island farmers. The website allows consumers to find which farms grow the type of produce they are looking for. This holistic approach, having all of the produce promotion in place, broadens the appeal of the website to a wide audience.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

To coincide with the website updates and features described in the Project Approach, there were efforts to increase awareness of these new features among farmers and consumers. Farmers were targeted through bi-monthly email newsletters, at conferences and through personal outreach at weekly farmers markets and other events. There were similar efforts aimed at the public for the consumer features of the Local Food Guide. Farm Fresh promoted the website address on popular bumperstickers, in all Farm Fresh printed materials, through a weekly email newsletter and social media publishing.

The measurable goals and outcomes outlined in the original proposal were all achieved or exceeded:

- 34 farmers signed up for new accounts. (9 more than expected)
- 237 farms have updated information. (37 more than expected)
- 65,000 unique visitors to the site each summer month. (10,000 more per month than expected)
- 50 new/experienced farmers use web resources to find/offer land, training or equipment. (20 more than expected)
- 220 RI farms with retail sales added to Google Local. (Achieved as expected)

Beneficiaries

This project benefited:

- all 600 or so RI farms, a majority of which grow specialty crops
- dozens of new farmers looking for help getting started
- thousands of Rhode Islanders looking for a farmers' market, farmstand, pick your own or CSA
- hundreds of schools, restaurants and food service purchasers looking to source from local farms
- researchers and journalists who cover farm and food topics

Lessons Learned

The Local Food Guide project continues to be a great success for RI specialty crop producers. The website reduced the upfront costs of finding local foods and created countless new relationships between farmers and buyers. Farm Fresh RI plans continued outreach to farmers and buyers to ensure the accuracy of the Local Food Guide database and its usefulness as a resource.

Contact Person

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Final Report for Specialty Crop Grant # 12-25-B-0838

Project Title

Trialing Heirloom Tomato and Lettuce Varieties for Organic Production

Project Summary

From the 1940s through the 1990s vegetable production in the United States became increasingly concentrated in a small number of areas with particularly favorable climate, topography, and economics for extremely large scale production. Vegetable breeding programs focused their efforts on development of varieties suited to the needs of these production areas. In the effort to develop tomatoes that could be shipped long distances without loss of quality breeders neglected flavor.

Consumers responded by demanding heirloom varieties. However, consumers also want produce grown without the use of pesticides or chemical fertilizers. This presents a challenge for growers because the heirloom varieties often lack the improved disease resistance and plant growth characteristics of modern varieties. Consumers have also developed a preference for salads made from baby leaf lettuce or mesclun rather than iceberg lettuce. Improvements in controlled-environment packaging have permitted tender young greens to be shipped long distances, but these bagged greens have been implicated in food-borne disease outbreaks, which decrease consumer confidence. Consumers have more confidence in locally-grown produce, making leaf lettuce a potentially profitable crop for Rhode Island growers. The purpose of this project was to evaluate heirloom tomato varieties under organic conditions, and to compare performance of leaf lettuce varieties for spring and fall production.

Project Approach

This project was conducted during the summer growing seasons of 2009. We trialed lettuce and heirloom tomatoes. The tomato trials were conducted according to USDA Organic production guidelines. We assembled a collection of 72 heirloom varieties through seed company donations and purchases from garden seed catalogs. Transplants were grown at URI and transplanted into the field in late May. Data was collected on days to flowering and on susceptibility to the diseases early blight (*Alternaria solani*) and late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*). Severe late blight led to the premature destruction of the trial and prevented collection of yield data. During the spring we evaluated 35 lettuce varieties for production of mature heads. The same varieties plus seven additional varieties were evaluated as baby lettuce in the fall. Varieties were evaluated on stand establishment, uniformity of maturity, quality, and yield. Trials were conducted under open field conditions.

Results and Recommendations – Tomato Trials

Diseases: There were no significant differences among varieties for early blight resistance, probably because early blight had just begun to affect the trial when the late blight attacked. On August 3 late blight symptoms ranged in severity from 2.0 to 7.3 on a 1-9 scale with 1 indicating severe disease on all plants. Purple Calabash showed the least disease; the LSD value was 1.7 so any variety with a score above 5.6 was statistically similar to Purple Calabash. One week later Purple Calabash still had the least disease but was moderately affected with a score of 2.3. The worst infected variety was Abe Lincoln with a score of 0.3. The LSD was 0.6 and any variety with a score above 1.7 was similar to Purple Calabash.

Recommendations:

Diseases are a major problem in tomato production in New England. The most powerful disease prevention tool available to organic growers is genetic resistance. Organic growers are taking a risk when they choose to grow heirloom varieties rather than disease-resistant modern hybrids. Growers should carefully weigh the potential risks, including crop failure, against the benefits of consumer demand for heirloom varieties. High tunnels and grafting may be advantageous in organic production of heirloom tomatoes and should be evaluated for Rhode Island.

Table 1

Variety	Late Blight August 3	Late Blight August 10	Flowering Date	Early Blight
Purple Calabash	7.3	2.3	30-Jun	8.7
Gills All Purpose	7.0	2.0	15-Jun	7.7
Bloody Butcher	7.0	1.7	22-Jun	7.3
NH Sure Crop	6.7	2.3	25-Jun	7.0

Variety	Late Blight August 3	Late Blight August 10	Flowering Date	Early Blight
Hy-Brix	6.3	1.7	16-Jun	9.0
Grand Charm	6.3	2.3	25-Jun	8.7
Marion	6.3	1.7	25-Jun	9.0
Thessaloniki	6.3	2.0	30-Jun	8.7
Green Zebra	6.0	1.5	15-Jun	9.0
Mantina	6.0	2.3	20-Jun	6.3
Valencia	6.0	1.3	21-Jun	8.0
Striped German	6.0	1.7	10-Jul	8.3
Prudens Purple	5.7	1.3	15-Jun	7.0
Sun Gold Hybrid	5.7	1.7	15-Jun	6.7
Tm961 Beaverlodge	5.7	1.0	15-Jun	7.3
Brandywine	5.7	1.3	21-Jun	8.0
Juliet	5.7	1.7	27-Jun	9.0
Marglobe	5.7	1.3	30-Jun	7.0
Red Pear Periform	5.7	1.7	1-Jul	8.3
Big Boy Hybrid	5.7	2.0	3-Jul	7.0
Geronimo	5.7	1.3	4-Jul	6.0
Momotaro	5.5	1.0	15-Jun	9.0
Booty	5.5	0.5	17-Jun	8.0
New Yorker	5.3	0.7	5-Jul	7.7
Druzba	5.3	1.3	6-Jul	8.7
Costoluto Genovese	5.0	1.0	20-Jun	9.0
Red Grape	5.0	2.0	23-Jun	8.5
Mr Fugly	5.0	1.3	25-Jun	7.7
Red Zebra	5.0	0.7	25-Jun	7.3
Nepal	5.0	1.7	30-Jun	8.5
Golden Jubilee	5.0	1.3	11-Jul	8.0
Bonito Ojo	4.7	2.0	15-Jun	9.0
Fraziers Gem	4.7	1.7	15-Jun	7.3
Japanse Black Trifele	4.7	1.0	15-Jun	7.7
STO-99197	4.7	1.0	15-Jun	6.7
Black Truffle	4.7	1.0	18-Jun	8.0
Cuostralee	4.7	1.0	25-Jun	8.3
Rutgers	4.7	1.7	30-Jun	8.0
Grandmas Little Girl	4.5	1.0	18-Jun	7.0
Principe Borghese	4.5	1.0	22-Jun	7.0
Rose	4.5	1.0	27-Jun	9.0
Trust	4.5	1.0	8-Jul	9.0
Japanese Trifele Black	4.3	0.7	15-Jun	7.3
Manitoba	4.3	0.7	15-Jun	9.0
Moskvich	4.3	1.0	23-Jun	7.7

Variety	Late Blight August 3	Late Blight August 10	Flowering Date	Early Blight
Amish Paste	4.3	1.3	25-Jun	7.7
Soldacki	4.3	1.3	25-Jun	7.7
Great White	4.3	1.3	27-Jun	8.0
Grandmas Treat	4.3	1.3	30-Jun	8.3
Cherokee Purple	4.3	1.7	30-Jun	8.0
Mini Star	4.0	1.5	15-Jun	7.5
Grandmas Pick	4.0	0.5	20-Jun	8.0
Brandywine Pink	4.0	1.3	27-Jun	8.0
Mini Charm	3.7	1.3	15-Jun	8.7
Peron Sprayless	3.7	1.0	23-Jun	8.7
Taxi	3.7	1.0	23-Jun	9.0
Fantastic Hybrid	3.7	1.3	25-Jun	8.0
Vintage Wine	3.7	1.3	27-Jun	8.5
Paragon	3.7	1.0	29-Jun	7.7
Aunt Rubys	3.3	1.0	23-Jun	8.7
Brandy Boy Hybrid	3.3	1.7	29-Jun	8.3
Glacier	3.0	0.5	15-Jun	8.0
Reif Red Heart	3.0	0.5	17-Jun	6.7
Bell Star	3.0	1.0	20-Jun	7.7
Orange Blossom	3.0	1.0	22-Jun	5.0
John Baer	3.0	0.7	27-Jun	7.7
Bonny Best	3.0	0.3	3-Jul	7.7
Silvery Fir Tree	2.7	1.0	15-Jun	7.7
Black Krim	2.7	1.3	22-Jun	7.3
Scotia	2.3	0.7	23-Jun	8.5
Tm960 Beaverlodge	2.0	1.0	15-Jun	8.7
Abe Lincoln	2.0	0.3	21-Jun	6.0

Late blight and early blight susceptibilities and flowering dates for tomato varieties in 2009 trial. A late blight score difference of 1.7 was significant on August 3, and a difference of 0.6 on August 10. Early blight symptoms were largely obscured by late blight damage after August 3.

Table 2

Territorial	Johnny's	Burpee
Glacier	Nepal	Black Truffle Hybrid
Principe Borghese	Cuostralee	Bloody Butcher
New Hampshire Sure		
Crop	Bell star	Black Krim
Manitoba	Great White	Rutgers
Scotia	Orange Blossom	Brandy Boy Hybrid
Bonito Ojo	Paragon F1	Druzba
Gill's All-Purpose	Taxi	Big Boy Hybrid
Peron Sprayless	STO-99197 F1	
Mantina	Brandywine	Totally Tomatoes
Purple Calabash	Japanese Black Trifele	Golden Jubilee
TM961 Beaverlodge 6806	Striped German	Thessaloniki
TM960 Beaverlodge 6808	Rose	John Baer
Frazier's Gem	Pruden's Purple	Vintage Wine
Silvery Fir Tree	Redpear- Periform	Marion
Green Zebra	Reif Red Heart	Abraham Lincoln Original
Japanese Trifele Black	Moskovich	Costoluto Genovese
Sun Gold Hybrid	Valencia	New Yorker VA
Momotaro	Geronimo F1	Soldacki
Fantastic Hybrid	Cherokee Purple	Red Zebra
	Trust F1	Bonny Best
		Aunt Ruby's German
Hart's Seeds	Juliet F1	Green
Amish Paste		
Marglobe	DP Seeds	
Brandywine Pink	Mini Charm	
	Booty	
NE Seed	Hy-Brix	
Mr. Fugly	Grand Charm	
	Red Grape	
	Mini Star	
	Grandma's Little Girl	
	Grandma's Pick	
	Grandma's Treat	

Seed sources for varieties in the 2009 trial.

Results and Recommendations – Lettuce Trials

Thirty-five varieties were tested as head lettuce in the spring trial, which was seeded April 29 and harvested July 8, 16, and 23. Within-row spacing was 8 inches, with 10 heads to each 8 foot single row plot. Maturity was slower than expected, ranging from 72-86 days rather than 42-56 days. This was probably a result of the cooler than usual temperatures. There was no disease and only one variety (Barbados) had problems with early bolting. Overall quality was excellent.

Forty-two varieties, including all 35 from the spring trial, were seeded August 14 for testing as baby leaf lettuce. Plots were eight feet long, with two broadcast rows approximately 4 inches wide separated by drip tape. Plots were weeded twice, and covered with floating row cover for frost protection. All plots were harvested as a single cutting on October 22.

Details about each variety are presented below. For the spring trial germination was rated for uniformity and completeness using a 1-10 scale with a score of 10 indicating that all seeds germinated at the same time, with no skips. Weight per head indicates the average head size over the entire plot, while uniformity indicates how uniformly the heads matured. Only mature heads were harvested at each harvest date; a uniformity score of 1.0 indicates that all of the heads in the plot reached harvestable size on the same date. The fall trial was rated for stand and growth using a 1-9 scale where higher ratings indicate a denser stand and larger plants. Plants were cut at the soil line and the harvested leaves were weighed to determine yield.

In the spring trial Waldmann's Dark Green and Crispino showed the best combination of large heads, good germination, and uniform maturity. Sunfire and Mottistone had the largest heads among the red lettuces but both had problems with germination and uniform maturity. The experimental line L-09-247 was the prettiest red lettuce in the trial with excellent germination and very uniform maturity. It is a small romaine, with an average head size of only 73 grams. Fireball was an attractive red butterhead with medium head size. Flashy Trout's Back and New Red Fire were the best of the multi-colored varieties. Both had medium heads, good germination, and reasonably uniform maturity.

Waldmann's Dark Green was also a top performer in the fall trial, yielding 3600 grams from the 8-foot plot. Truckee did equally well, with better germination than in the spring trial. Other varieties which yielded well included Salad Bowl and Tropicana (both 2700 grams), Green Star (2600 g), Crispino (2400 g) and Barbados (2400 g). All of these green varieties combined dense stands and large plants. The best of the red varieties were Outredgeous (1600 g) and L-09-247 (1100 g). Both varieties had dense stands and excellent color. Many of the red and red-and-green varieties had pale red color in the fall trial. Dark Red Lollo Rosso was noteworthy in that it had better color in the fall than in the spring. Cherokee, Oscarde, and Red Rosie also had good color, but poor germination reduced their yields. Flashy Trout's Back was the best of the red-and-green varieties, with good color and a yield of 1900 grams. Breen and Delta Dawn are worth mentioning for their pretty bronze leaves and reasonable yields.

Table 1-Spring. Head lettuce trial data.

Variety Name	Spring Germination	weight per head (g)	Uniformity of maturity	Spring notes
Deer Tongue	5	213	1	very uniform, good color, compact heads
Waldmann's Dark Green	10	400	0.8	large, well-formed heads. Bright green.
Salad Bowl	9	238	0.6	variable size, open heads
Tropicana	10	277	0.7	thick leaves, well-shaped heads
Sunfire	3	200	0.4	poor color (pale red with green) flat heads with lower leaves on ground
Magenta	5	169	0.7	beautiful heads - bright green with strong red edges.
Rouge d'Hiver	3	171	0.6	very pretty - like Magenta but a small romaine
Concept	9	133	0.9	bright green, well-formed heads
Crispino	8	520	1	pretty, headed well, uniform
Ermosa	2	314	0.6	rough heads, variable maturity
Two Star	4	410	0.6	good color, large heads
New Red Fire	7	146	0.9	excellent color, uniform
Loma	8	108	0.8	small
Antago	5	111	0.9	very uniform bright red, pretty heads
Green Star	8	269	0.9	good shape, good basic green leaf type, uniform
Mottistone	4	150	0.6	
Breen	6	131	0.8	chocolate-colored leaves. Pretty small romaine
Cherokee	4	117	0.8	really good color
Dark Red Lollo Rossa	7	80	1	very small, poor color (pinkish centers)
Coastal Star	6	127	1	late, basic small romaine
Teide	6	120	0.8	very red, pretty, didn't really head
Sylvesta	6	167	0.9	excellent color, uniform, didn't really head
Fireball	7	115	0.8	uniform appearance, very red, pretty
L-09-247	8	73	1	beautiful dark red, very uniform appearance
L-09-246	6	217	0.5	not all formed heads, late, variable maturity
White Cos	4	133	0.8	good basic romaine
Merveille Des Quatres Seasons	4	100	1	very pretty, color not very uniform between heads
Outredgeous	5	67	0.6	light red color
Delta Dawn	6	140	0.7	outer leaves olive green, inner deep red. Unusual leaf shape
Drunken Woman Frizzy Headed	6	109	0.8	pretty, head size variable
Flashy Trout's Back	9	214	0.9	very pretty, uniform
De Morges Braun	5	100	0.5	color not uniform
Jericho	8	142	0.8	short wide leaves for Romaine, not dense
Truckee	7	245	0.5	excellent color
Barbados	6	167	0.6	bolted!

Table 1-Fall. Baby leaf trial data

Variety Name	Fall stand	Fall growth	Fall yield (g)	Fall notes
Deer Tongue	6	7	1600	Uneven growth
Waldmann's Dark Green	9	9	3600	Large plants
Salad Bowl	9	9	2700	Some variability, large plants
Tropicana	9	9	2700	Dense stand
Sunfire	7	7	900	Poor color
Magenta	3	4	210	
Rouge d'Hiver	6	8	1100	Patchy stand, medium red
Concept	4	6	450	Good color, patchy stand
Crispino	8	8	2400	
Ermosa	8	6	1400	Lots of off-type plants, dense stand
Two Star	7	4	500	Small plants
New Red Fire	6	8	1000	Pale color
Loma	1	1	10	Poor germination and very small plants
Antago	7	7	900	Good color, variable size
Green Star	9	9	2600	
Mottistone	7	4	800	OK red, dense stand
Breen	7	6	1000	Good color
Cherokee	6	8	800	Great color
Dark Red Lollo Rossa	7	5	900	Bright red, small
Coastal Star	7	9	1800	
Sylvesta	5	7	800	Patchy stand
Fireball	7	7	800	Pale red
L-09-247	9	8	1100	Shiny dark red color, dense stand
L-09-246	7	9	1500	Large plants
White Cos	5	7	300	Poor stand
Merveille Des Quatres Seasons	7	5	200	Color not uniform, small plants
Outredgeous	7	9	1600	Pretty, shiny leaves
Delta Dawn	8	8	1400	Leaves bronze and green
Drunken Woman Frizzy Headed	6	7	720	Pale, OK stand, medium plants
Flashy Trout's Back	9	9	1900	Beginning to form heads, pretty
De Morges Braun	5	5	200	Poor color and stand, small plants
Jericho	9	7	900	Small but uniform
Truckee	9	9	3600	Large plants
Barbados	8	8	2400	Beautiful emerald color, large plants, dense stand
Oscarde	4	4	160	Glorious color, patchy germination
Foceia	6	6	440	Good color, small plants
Baby Oakleaf	4	4	200	Uneven growth
Claremont	3	3	100	Uneven growth
Red Rosie	7	8	700	Really pretty, shiny
Nancy	3	4	200	Pretty but poor stand
Winter Density	8	7	1500	Very uniform, good color
Rubane	7	7	1400	Uniform, frilly, small plants

Table 2. Variety descriptions and seed sources.

Variety Name	Color	Type	Source
Antago	red	lollo	Johnny's
Baby Oakleaf	green	oakleaf	Johnny's
Barbados	green	summercrisp	Johnny's
Breen	red	romaine	Johnny's
Cherokee	red	summercrisp	Johnny's
Claremont	green	romaine	Johnny's
Coastal Star	green	romaine	Johnny's
Concept	green	grand rapids	Johnny's
Crispino	green	summercrisp	Johnny's
Dark Red Lollo Rossa	red	lollo	Johnny's
De Morges Braun	green w/ red	romaine	Territorial
Deer Tongue	green	butterhead	Johnny's
Delta Dawn	green	romaine	Territorial
Drunken Woman Frizzy Headed	green w/ red	butterhead	Territorial
Ermosa	green	butterhead	Johnny's
Fireball	red	butterhead	Johnny's
Flashy Trout's Back	green w/ red	romaine	Territorial
Foceia	green	butterhead	Johnny's
Green Star	green	grand rapids	Johnny's
Jericho	green	romaine	Territorial
L-09-246	green	summercrisp	DP Seeds
L-09-247	red	romaine	DP Seeds
Loma	green	summercrisp	Johnny's
Magenta	green w/ red edges	summercrisp	Johnny's
Merveille Des Quatres Seasons	reddish	butterhead	Hart's
Mottistone	red	summercrisp	Johnny's
Nancy	green	butterhead	Johnny's
New Red Fire	green w/ red edges	grand rapids	Johnny's
Oscarde	red	oakleaf	Hart's
Outredgeous	red	romaine	Johnny's
Red Rosie	red	romaine	Johnny's
Rouge d'Hiver	green w/ red edges	romaine	Johnny's
Rubane	red	romaine	Johnny's
Salad Bowl	green	oakleaf	Johnny's
Sunfire	red	oakleaf	Johnny's
Sylvesta	green	butterhead	Johnny's
Teide	red	summercrisp	Johnny's
Tropicana	green	grand rapids	Johnny's
Truckee	green	oakleaf	Johnny's
Two Star	green	grand rapids	Johnny's
Waldmann's Dark Green	green	grand rapids	Johnny's
White Cos	green	romaine	Hart's
Winter Density	green	romaine	Johnny's

Significant Contributions and Roles of Project Partners

All research for this project was conducted at the University of Rhode Island/RIAES Greene H. Gardiner Crop Science Research Farm. The project was a collaborative effort between faculty (Rebecca Brown), extension staff (Kristen Castrataro), farm staff (Carl Sawyer), students (Tim Sherman, Cindy Percivalle, Erik Harel, Tara Church, Chris Turco, and Charleve Carey) and Master Gardeners. Rebecca Brown provided project oversight and planning. Kristen Castrataro organized Twilight Meetings and communicated the project results to farmers. Carl Sawyer supervised daily operations, and the students and Master Gardeners provided the labor force. Seed was contributed by the companies listed in the data tables.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The goal of this project was to identify the best vegetable varieties to grow for local market in Rhode Island and southern New England. We met those goals for lettuce, but were unable to meet them for tomatoes because of the late blight epidemic. The potential impacts and expected measureable outcomes described in the proposal were:

Potential Impact:

- Increase growers' ability to make informed decisions on varieties for tomatoes and other vegetables
- Introduce 30-40 growers to new vegetable varieties for local fresh market at the URI Vegetable Twilight Meeting
- Show farmers which varieties can sustain low input, addressing concerns for both organic and conventional farmers
- Demonstrate to farmers the feasibility of environmentally friendly organic farming
- Provide 15-20 URI students interested in vegetable production with an opportunity for hands-on experience
- Enable 3-5 students to learn farming skills, creating a supply of skilled seasonal labor for local growers
- Provide fresh, local produce for the Rhode Island Food Bank and local food pantries and soup kitchens

Expected Measureable Outcomes

- Five Rhode Island growers will grow at least one new variety in 2011 as a result of the trial
- Two URI students will use experience gained through this project to obtain jobs on Rhode Island farms in 2010
- 500 pounds of fresh local vegetables will be donated to the hungry in Rhode Island

A Twilight meeting featuring the variety trials were held on August 27, 2009. There were 15 farmers at the meeting. Other farmers have taken advantage of the variety trial reports via the URI Sustainable Agriculture website. Four URI students learned farming skills and 11 students gained hands-on

experience in vegetable production through this project. One of the students involved in the project in 2009 has been employed on a farm in Rhode Island as a result of involvement in this project; another has been hired as a permanent employee at the URI research farm. Three of the students exposed to vegetable production through this project are now majoring in food production agriculture and planning to pursue careers in farming. Due to the late blight epidemic we were unable to meet our goal of 500 pounds of fresh local produce delivered to the RI Food Bank. However, the lettuce was donated to the food pantry operated by the Johnnycake Center of Peacedale.

It is too soon to tell whether farmers will choose to grow new varieties in 2011 based on the results of these trials. As mentioned above, two of the students associated with the project in 2009 went on to work on farms.

Beneficiaries

This project had three groups of beneficiaries: practicing farmers in southern New England, sustainable agriculture students at URI, and the estimated 25% of Rhode Islanders who depend on the Rhode Island Foodbank and affiliated organizations for food.

- Practicing farmers benefit from this project when they use the results of the variety trials to inform their decisions of which varieties to grow on their farms. These decisions can be economically significant but are difficult to quantify.
- Students benefit from this project through the opportunity to learn farming skills. The project funded by this grant has been leveraged with other state and federal funding to substantially rebuild the food production agriculture program at URI. We now have two undergraduate classes in vegetable production and one in fruit production. We have a graduate program and an undergraduate specialization in sustainable agriculture, and an interdisciplinary undergraduate major in sustainable agriculture and food systems is being developed. We have updated equipment and facilities at the farm, and are now providing produce grown by students to URI Dining Services.
- The people of Rhode Island benefit from the fresh vegetables provided to the Rhode Island Food Bank and affiliated organizations. The vegetables improve the diets of the food pantry clientele, and they increase the number of people the food bank can serve, as limited funding does not need to go toward imported produce.

Lessons Learned

This project has been a part of the continual effort to improve and refine our farming practices. We have identified some excellent varieties of lettuce which will be incorporated into other projects. We have learned that none of the heirloom varieties have acceptable levels of late blight resistance for organic production in wet years, and have begun trialing the new late blight resistant varieties being released. We have also learned that there is great excitement about agriculture in Rhode Island, especially among young people.

Contact Person

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Additional Information

The url for the variety trial reports on the web is http://cels.uri.edu/sustainableag/SAG_trials.html

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Doreen Pezza

FINAL REPORT FOR PROJECT 12-25-B-0838

Title:

How cutting flowers can increase the bottom line for Rhode Island growers.

Project Summary

The purpose of the project was to get farmers interested in growing cut flowers to enhance their product line, line at their farm stands and their farmers markets.

To do so we needed to establish a unique cutting garden , to send out meeting notices, to print necessary literature, administrative costs and to hire qualified speakers.

Several meetings were hosted at the farm.

Plant Diseases, and pest control, that affect cut flowers and ways to control them were discussed.

The best varieties of flowers to plant for cutting gardens were shown in a trial garden.

Handouts and cultural information was supplied.

The proper technique for cutting, arranging, and transporting cut flowers to markets was explained.

Project Approach:

Three twilight meetings- July, August, and September.

There were between fifteen to twenty people at each meeting.

At the first meeting a list of cutting flowers was handed out to all attendees.

A tour of the cutting garden was used to showcase the flowers on the list.

The speaker was Heather Faubert from U.R.I. at the second meeting.

She explained disease control and handed out lists of appropriate fungicides and pesticides for cut flowers.

At the third meeting Gayle Wolstenholme presented exhibits of unusual annuals and perennials for a cutting garden.

She also handed out a complete list of these flowers including print resources.

At this third meeting Shelley Pezza demonstrated appropriate cutting techniques and arranging of cut flowers.

A working cutting garden was established.

The garden was a half acre plot.

There were twenty different varieties of flowers used for cutting.

They were chosen because they have proven to be culturally appropriate and consumer accepted.

Flowers were ageratum, alternanthera, aster, celosia combed, celosia feather, dahlia, eucalyptus, gladiolas, gomphrena, helianthus, helichrysum, rudbeckia, salvia, snapdragon, statice, verbena, zinnia-cut&come, zinnia- state fair, dianthus.

This garden was then used for our demonstrations.

-
-

Project Goals Achieved:

Local growers were shown how to diversify and extend their product line at farmers markets and farm stands by adding cut flowers.

Adding cutting flowers can increase the season on both ends and, be financially beneficial to their business.

Project Outcome:

It has been observed that more local cut flowers are being sold at farmers markets.

I have observed more perennial cut flowers are being sold at the markets.

Growers acquired necessary information to grow and market an additional crop (cut flowers) to enhance their product line and benefit their bottom line.

All the participants at our meetings have notified us that the meetings were helpful in increasing their product line with cut flowers.

-

Project Beneficiaries:

We provided growers with the information and expertise in the cut flower market to increase their revenue and diversify their crops.

By introducing a flower crop it will add to their product line which will add to their customer count.

-

Project Lessons Learned:

Those attending the meetings learned about growing, disease and insect prevention, cutting, arranging, displaying and marketing cutting flowers.

RHODE ISLAND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



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May 26, 2011

Final Performance Report

Project Title : Ocean State Bees ABC Advance Beekeeper Course (Training).

Project Number : Specialty Crop 12-25-B-0838

Project Summary

The Rhode Island Rural Development Council as the lead agency made formal application to the 2008 RIDEM Farm Viability Grant program for Specialty Crops Competitiveness on behalf of Ocean State Bees, principal Michael Southern and, partnered with Mark Robar, Trails End Farm, Richmond, RI. This two-year project encompassed the development and delivery of an intermediate training course for up to 45 participants each receiving classroom instruction and consultant / instructors will provide participants 2.5 hours of hands-on technical instructor field training on bee pollination processes of specialty crops within Rhode Island.

Historically in Rhode Island, there have been no beekeeper courses available in Rhode Island beyond a basic hobbyist training instruction. All such single classroom course work is currently offered by the RI Beekeepers Association *. Today, with threats such as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and Disappearing Disease threatening to disrupt the natural pollination process, it is necessary for beekeepers to understand and learn how to preserve honeybees especially over the harsh New England winters and propagate honeybees to be used in the specialty crop pollination process. The Advanced Beekeeping Course (ABC) offered by Ocean State Bees will provide intermediate level beekeeper training that is more comprehensive than that presently available.

** NOTE: As stated above, there no advanced beekeeper training is offered in Rhode Island. As of March, 2011, the new President-elect of the RI Beekeepers Association (elected March 2011)*

campaigned with a promise to offer more beekeeper pollination training through the Association.

(2) Purpose

Effective natural pollination is critical for specialty crop growers. Effective pollination can increase crop yields by as much as 1/3 and can ensure a healthier, more marketable crop. More intense beekeeper training with strategically placed hive stations throughout the State can assure specialty crop growers that a robust bee stock will be available for pollination purposes.

(3) Impact

By assuring a healthy bee stock through more comprehensive beekeeper training, specialty crop growers can realize improved crop yields and more efficient use of resources, such as energy, that must be expended to produce a crop. A larger, healthier bee stock will result from ABC training programs that will insure that more local bees survive the winter months and beekeepers will be trained to assure improved pollination techniques for all crops in Rhode Island.

Project Approach

- The new pilot course offered in April, 2010, covered specialty crop pollination background, applications in Rhode Island, techniques for transporting bees, relationships with farmers, and additional information. Each session featured extensive question/answer sessions. Attendance for the April classes was 18. The courses were held at the Meadowbrook Gardens, Hope Valley, RI.
- Course materials were purchased from the MAAREC, University of Pennsylvania, Beekeeper Basics, original guide prepared by Clarence H. Collison, former extension entomologist, major updates and revisions prepared by Maryann Frazier, senior extension associate, and Penn State, and Dewey Caron, professor of entomology and applied ecology/extension entomologist, University of Delaware. Contributions made by Ann Harmon and Dennis VanEnglesdorp.
- Abstract materials and customized powerpoint presentation added from personal experience by instructors as well as reorganized document content. Each participant received handout materials distributed regarding the equipment demonstrations presented during course of study in their user-packages.
- A second pilot session was run in April 2011, covering specialty crop pollination background, applications in Rhode Island, techniques for transporting bees, relationships with farmers, and additional information. The day's session also featured extensive question/answer sessions and provided training to 38 backyard beekeepers.

- Second-year classroom program was presented on April 30, 2011 at the University of RI East Farm, Kingston, Rhode Island.
- 268 Preliminary invitations distributed; via email and postal mail from a mailing list developed over several years from: beekeeping contacts, inquiries received, and recommendations from other beekeepers. Listings included email addresses of interested people.
- 38 positive responses and pre-paid course fees received for second session.

Goals and Targets Achieved

- ❑ Trained over 56 participants over the two year grant period.
- ❑ Three classroom programs offered.
- ❑ First year: All classroom participants were offered and eligible to receive field mentoring sessions. Practical field mentoring and visits after classroom training presented to 6 participants.
- ❑ Second year: All classroom participants were offered and eligible to receive field mentoring sessions. Field visits and instructions to be scheduled to begin in June/July 2011 timeframe for April 2011 attendees. All course fee income is totally re-invested in the field mentoring activities for any interested participants who attended the classroom training course.

Beneficiaries

- Clearly the candidates who attended the course. Already many interested and purchasing hives or additional hives.
- Better understanding by classroom attendees of the importance of bees and pollination plants.
- Better placement techniques for hives closer to pollination crops and plants; and, better understanding of methods to protect bees from the cold New England winter months.
- Potential for a few participants to market their own bees' honey.
- Organic farmers who offered areas for crop pollination.

Lessoned Learned

The Ocean State Bees training consultants have lead the way for the training and increased knowledge of local beekeepers and those interested in plant and organic vegetable pollination.

Vision is to promote strategically situated stations of hives and experienced beekeepers to pollinate plants and organic crops within small radii areas. From this initial start, it is hoped that further development of beekeepers stations will cover the strategic farming areas in our State for better crop yields and healthier bee stocks.

An interesting outcome from the Ocean State Bees ABC Course, is the fact that the newest leaders of the RI Beekeepers Association (RIBA) now acknowledge the fact that there should have been additional training provided to RIBA members and interested parties. Only after this program was introduced was there a degree of recognition given to perhaps exploring more continued educational training for beekeepers in Rhode Island.

Contact Person

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Project Title

RI. DEM GET FRESH BUY LOCAL Campaign Final Report

Project Summary

This program was built on the previous projects and enhanced our commitment to increase demand and consumption of RI Grown Specialty Crops. Our motivation was to enhance the marketing of Fruits and Vegetables in the State for over 100 farmers. This was needed to help slow down the loss of Agricultural Land to development by making farming of Specialty Crops viable in Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Division of Agriculture working with specialty crop growers throughout the state expanded on its "Rhode Island Grown Take Some Home" buy local initiative by conducting produce preparation demonstrations featuring local celebrity chefs at all RI farmers market and participating roadside stands. The Division also updated its RI Agricultural Display. We also used grant funds on marketing projects with Harvest New England which is a multi-state project consisting of the six New England States in a joint effort to capitalize on the local grown effort into the retail trade, namely the large supermarket chains operating throughout the New England region. The Division also uses SCGF to enhance its marketing program by making point of purchase advertising material available to farmers. The need for this project is to help keep Specialty Crop Farming Viable in Rhode Island. Since Rhode Island has such a short growing season it was critical for us to get Specialty Crop Farmers (Fruit and Vegetable Growers) the logo material.

Project Approach

By expanding our marketing efforts by purchasing a display and doing shows throughout the State we increased demand for RI Grown Specialty Products (fruit and vegetables). We also expanded our farmers' market program by introducing wireless EBT technology into two additional markets. At the market we increased sales for Rhode Island Specialty Crop Farmers. Also our support in the Harvest New England Program expanded our sales by promoting a regional supply of fruit and vegetables.

Our partnership with Rhode Island Specialty Crop Growers has served over 300,000 Rhode Island residents by bringing the locally grown fruits and vegetables. Working with over 40 farmers markets we have increased outlets for the sale of locally grown Specialty Crops. Fruit, Vegetables, Nursery Stock and Honey are now in demand more than ever.

In interviewing farmers we have seen a 5% increase in sales of Specialty Crops over last year. We interviewed 50 Specialty Crop farmers at farmers markets and asked if they have seen any increase in sales due to our marketing efforts.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

By expanding our marketing efforts by purchasing a display and doing shows throughout the State we have increase demand for RI Grown Products. Also by expanding our farmers' market program and introducing wireless EBT technology into the markets we have increased sales for Rhode Island Farmers. These sales were documented by bank statements showing sales of fruit and vegetables that were processed through the EBT machines. There were sales of \$7,000 processed on the EBT machine for Specialty Crops. We also measured the increase sales of RI Grown Specialty Crops by speaking and surveying farmers to see if their sales have increased. We know as in the past informing the public about RI Grown Specialty Crops increases demand for such products.

The goals we achieved for the season are:

- Purchased new 10x10 display graphics for shows
- Set up EBT systems at 7 farmers markets
- Re-Certified 30 farms for GAP compliance for sales to school districts
- Had cooking demonstrations at farmers markets throughout the season at 10 farmers markets over 6000 people learned how to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables. This was a partnership we have with Johnson and Wales University that is very popular.
- Gave out information to 40,000 citizens promoting RIGrown at shows
- Point of purchase material is critical to educate the public as to what products are RI Grown Specialty Crops. These point of purchase materials also let the farmer help customers identify which are Rhode Island Grown Specialty Crops. We will measure the outcomes of our actions through the surveying of farmers to see if our efforts have increased demand for their products.
- Of the 50 Specialty Crop Farmers Surveyed. All responded that our efforts have helped them in some way to stay viable as a Specialty Crop Grower in RI. They all have seen an increase in sales.
- We held Agriculture Day at the Rhode Island State house May of 2010 and over 30 Specialty Crop Farmers were able to give out information about the crops they grow and where establishments are located. Over 2000 people attended the event. There was also a proclamation from the Governor for Agriculture Day in Rhode Island.

OUR MARKETING EFFORTS HAVE LEAD AGRICULTURE TO BE THE ONLY SEGMENT OF THE RHODE ISLAND ECONOMY THAT IS PROSPERING.

Our support of the Harvest New England Project helped with the following:

Project 1: *The Expanding New England Farm Enterprise: Reaping More From What We Sow – A Harvest New England Ag Marketing Conference & Trade Show*

The Harvest New England (HNE) Conference was held in Sturbridge, MA. The central location of Sturbridge, MA enables most New England specialty crop farmers to attend this three-day marketing conference.

This is the third conference HNE held. It is held every other year with this being the largest conference thus far. Over 450 farmers from around New England and beyond were in attendance. 57 farmers' market managers and 37 agricultural nonprofits also attended. Including speakers, trade show exhibitors, and conference organizer, 820 people attended the conference over three days.

Specialty Crop Block Grant funds went towards the following expenses which contributed towards educating farmers on ways to enhance the competitiveness of New England specialty crops:

- Scholarships to attend the conference at no charge went to 54 specialty crop farmers
- Two keynote speaker fees and expenses
- Breakout session speaker honorariums and expenses for breakout sessions
- Hotel space rental expenses for breakout sessions
- Audio visual expenses for breakout sessions
- Expenses for materials related to specialty crop breakout sessions

The total conference expenses from Specialty Crop Block Grant funds was \$23,846.08 or a state contribution of \$3,974.34.

Project 2: Harvest New England Light Post Banners on the Avenue of States at the Big E.

28 light post banners promoting the Harvest New England logo and the importance of buying New England specialty crops were designed and developed for the Avenue of States at the Big E.

The project was done in partnership with the Eastern States Expositions which required HNE to pay only 50% of the project costs. \$2559 in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds (\$426.50 per state) were utilized to design and develop the banners. Eastern States Expositions took responsibility for hanging the banners on the light posts and the hardware to do so.

Throughout the Big E, 1,228,418 people attend. Nearly everyone walks down the Avenue of States and through each of the State Buildings. The location of the banners both on the Avenue of States and in each of the State Buildings gave the HNE logo and importance of buying local ample visibility.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the project are all the citizens of Rhode Island and Specialty Crop Farmers. Our efforts have increased the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables for the citizens of Rhode Island.

Lessoned Learned

We have learned that marketing of Fruits and Vegetables is critical to increasing sales and keeping farming viable in Rhode Island

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